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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000102

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: BASRAH GOVERNOR RENEWS EFFORTS TO REMOVE POLICE CHIEF,  
BACKTRACKS ON SECURITY PLAN

REF: A) BASRAH 95, B) BASRAH 98, C) BASRAH 75, D) 05 BASRAH 49

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CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, REO BASRAH,  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Basrah Governor Mohammed al-Wa'eli again renewed his efforts to replace Chief of Police (CoP) Hassan Sewady al-Saad by calling for a vote of no confidence on June ¶11. He said that the emergency security plan was not successful in halting violence in Basrah because the CoP was not qualified for his position and police efforts were less than robust. The CoP does not believe the governor will be able to replace him unless he manages to bribe Minister of Interior officials. The governor, he said, had been trying to remove him from his position for months because of his efforts to reform the police.  
End Summary.

#### Governor Says Basrah Police Are the Problem

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¶2. (C) In a June 13 meeting, the Basrah Regional Coordinator (RC), Deputy Regional Coordinator (DRC), and Poloff met with Basrah Governor Mohammed al-Wa'eli to discuss the security situation in Basrah and the role of the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and Iraqi Army (IA) two weeks after the declared State of Emergency (see Ref A). The Governor said that the current security plan has many gaps and requires modifications. The CoP, according to Wa'eli, is not qualified to lead the IPS and is not cooperating fully in implementing the security plan. The Governor said he has not received any assistance from the central government to improve Basrah's security and claimed that he was responsible for devising and implementing the security plan.

¶3. (C) Governor Wa'eli repeatedly stressed that the plan was not working as well as it should because General Sewady and the IPS were not doing their jobs. He said that he had observed firsthand in trips around the city that IPS did not carry out their duties. Lack of cooperation from the CoP and IPS resulted in "gaps" in the security plan, the governor said. He identified weak leadership, militia infiltration, lack of police discipline and high levels of corruption as the reasons behind the IPS's poor performance. He said he had proposed a plan to the central government that would force approximately half of the IPS to retire to make room to hire more qualified officers. The Governor expressed frustration that his time was tied up with security issues and that he did not have time to focus on other issues, such as corruption. If the IPS had strong leadership and did their jobs, he said, he would be able to

shift his focus to other matters.

¶4. (C) In a complete turn-around from his June 5 statements regarding the role of the Iraqi Army in implementing the security plan, the governor told the RC and DRC that the plan would be more successful with increased IA participation (see Ref B), and he was working to incorporate more IA assistance and participation in the plan. Governor Wa'eli also said that the security committee is coordinating with MND-SE forces on modifications to the plan and is working on a six-month security plan for Basrah. Even with the problems inherent in the security plan, the Governor opined that there had been an improvement in the security situation in the past two weeks.

#### CoP Presents Alternate View on Security Plan

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¶5. (C) In a June 12 meeting with the RC, CoP Sewady said that the security plan was good and that he was attempting to implement it in spite of interference from the governor. As an example of the Governor's obstruction, he described an incident on June 8 when three men were arrested after launching a mortar attack near police headquarters. Later that day, men wearing uniforms from the Serious Crimes Unit appeared at the police station, said that both they and the detainees were "governor's men," and pressured the police officers into releasing the detainees. The detainees filed a court case against the police for imprisoning them without evidence, and they were able to do this because the governor was in control of the security committee. (Comment: When asked about the attack on the police station, Governor Wa'eli said he had heard something about the attack, but said that no one had been arrested in relation to it. End Comment).

¶6. (C) The CoP acknowledged that corruption was a major problem in the police force and said that this was why it was necessary to incorporate Iraqi Army and coalition forces into the plan. As long as there were militias in Basrah, the CoP said, there would be security problems. The plan itself, he said, consisted

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mostly of increasing vehicle checkpoints and patrols in the "hot spots" in Basrah. He said he believed a committee from Baghdad from either the PM's office or the MoI would arrive in Basrah in the near future to work on implementing the security plan.

(Note: The governor, when asked about a possible visit of a committee from Baghdad, said he knew of no such committee but that the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Interior may visit Basrah in the next few days to discuss the security situation. End Note.)

#### Voting Out the Chief of Police

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¶7. (C) The Governor acknowledged that the Basrah Provincial Council (BPC) had met on June 11 and voted on the removal of the Basrah CoP, but that only 24 members voted in favor of the removal. Only 31 of the 41 BPC members attended the session, and some members abstained from voting. The Governor said that if all 41 members were present they might have gotten the 28 votes necessary to remove the Chief of Police. Even though the necessary 28 votes were not made, the Governor confirmed that eight names had been forwarded to the Ministry of Interior as possible replacements for the CoP, but said that all eight candidates were unqualified.

¶8. (C) The governor publicly announced his disapproval of the CoP in a press conference on May 13 (see Ref C). CoP Sewady expressed doubt that the governor would be able to get rid of him, noting that he had been attempting to remove him either through assassination attempts or through the political process for over a year and had thus far been unsuccessful. He said that he had strong support from the MoI, as well as from members of the Basrah Islamic List on the BPC. He expressed disdain for most BPC members, who constantly request that he supply them with cars, weapons, ammunition, and bodyguards.

¶9. (C) CoP Sewady said that he had been informed by his contacts in the MoI that names had been forwarded to the MoI as candidates to replace him as CoP. He identified one of the candidates as General Mohammed Kadhem Ali, a former CoP that CoP Sewady said "corrupted the police in the first place" by hiring politically affiliated police (see Ref D). If he does get replaced, the CoP said, it would be because MoI officials were bribed into getting rid of him.

#### Chief of Police Says Basrah Governor Is the Problem

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¶10. (C) The CoP said that the increase in violence in Basrah since the May 31 declaration of the State of Emergency was, in his opinion, due to Governor Wa'eli, the Fadillah party, and their militia reacting to the strong criticism of Sunni Vice President Hashimi. The marketplace bombing on June 3 with the subsequent attack on the Sunni mosques was a show of strength to retaliate against the perceived "meddling" of the central government in Basrah's affairs. When asked why the governor was appointed head of the security committee, the CoP replied that this decision had been made after seeing the negative reaction of the local government to the PM's visit in order to avoid an escalation in tension and violence.

¶11. (C) Comment: The governor was clearly opposed to the PM's declaration of a State of Emergency in Basrah, while the CoP expressed support for it - because it resulted in a loss of face for the Basrah governor. Now that the IA has been accorded a greater role in implementing the plan, the governor is supporting the move for the same reasons - because it makes the CoP look like he is incapable of doing his job. Governor Wa'eli's proposed police reformation plan sounds very similar to the reformations that CoP Sewady has been trying to implement since he assumed his position - reduce the number of unqualified police in the force and fight corruption. However, the governor's increasingly desperate attempts to remove CoP Sewady from his position suggest that his true interests lie in protecting his militia members on the police force and maintaining his influence in security matters. The CoP has always opposed militia infiltration and the influence of the Islamic political parties on the police force. CoP Sewady was instrumental in disbanding the Division of Internal Affairs in December 2005, which functioned as an extrajudicial force under the personal control of Governor al-Wa'eli that was involved in criminal activities. End Comment.  
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